Statement

Growth of Cellular Subscribers during last six years.

Subscribers as on	Metros	Circles	Total
1st April, 1997	3,25,967	12,698	3,38,665
1st April, 1998	5,51,757	3,30,559	8,82,316
1st April, 1999	5,19,543	6,80,035	11,99,578
1st April, 2000	7,95,931	10,88,380	18,84,311
1st April, 2001	13,62,592	22,14,503	35,77,095
1st April, 2002	25,67,757	38,63,763	64,31,520
1st April; 2003	44,39,524	82,48,113	1,26,87,637
1st July, 2003	51,12,047	1,00,36,749	1,51,48,796

Village public telephones

2560. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of village public telephones installed in the country upto the March, 2003, State-wise;

(b) whether a very high proportion of the installed VPTs remain non-functional;

(c) if so, percentage thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to run these VPTs satisfactority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : (a) The number of Village Public Telephone installed upto the March 2003 State-wise is given in the Statement enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) Every effort is made to keep the VPT in perfect order by following maintenance steps :

(1) Testing of VPTs is carried out daily by dialing from exchanges.

(2) Testing of VPTs on MARR lines are carried out daily form Base Station.

(3) Meter readings are checked fortnightly and low meter reading VPTs are checked properly.

Statement

State-wise status of VPTs as on 31-03-2003

Sl. No.	State	Total No. of Villages	Total No. of VPTs provided as on 31-3-2003
1	2	3	4
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	201	198
2.	Andhra Pradesh	29460	24733
3.	Assam	24685	18025
4.	Bihar	41077	38475
5.	Jharkhand	31703	26270
6.	Gujarat	18125	15153
7.	Haryana	6850	6811
8.	Himachal Pradesh	16925	16585
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	6864	4249
10.	Karnataka	27066	27066
11.	Kerala	1468	1468
12.	Madhya Pradesh	51806	37945
13.	Chhattisgarh	19720	14665
14.	Maharashtra	42467	33560
15.	North-East-I		
	Meghalaya	5555	1989
	Mizoram	708	605
	Tripura	862	748
16.	North-East-II		
	Arunachal Pradesh	3389	715
	Manipur	2439	800
	Nagaland	1192	829

1	2	3	4
17.	Orissa	46989	40435
18.	Punjab	12687	12687
19.	Rajasthan	39483	24874
20.	Tamil Nadu	17899	17899
21.	Uttar Pradesh (E)	79792	75965
22.	Uttar Pradesh (W)	23604	21268
23.	Uttaranchal	15610	11630
24.	West Bengal	37910	36932
25.	Sikkim	427	374
26.	Kolkata	437	437
27.	Delhi	191	191
	TOTAL :	607491	513581

Exemption of officers from liability

2561. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether sections 6 and 43 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1893 stipulates exemption to officers from liability of loss, delay, misdelivery and damage;

(b) whether this exemption is absolute and if not, why the officers are not charged with dereliction of duty and deficiency; and

(c) whether Government propose to amend such obnoxious sections which creates hurdles in the efficient administration of the Department and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI S U. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR) : (a) and (b) The Indian Post Office Act is actually of 1898. Section 6 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, provides that no officer of the Post Office shall incur any liability by reason of any such loss, misdelivery, delay or damage, unless he has caused the same fraudulently or by his wilful act or default. This expemption is not absolute.